IN THE BEGINNING

Published Quarterly By
Woodson County Historical Society
Yates Center, Kansas

IN THE BEGINNING

Vol. 1 No. 1 January,1968
Lester A. Harding - Editor

EDITOR'S NOTES -

In the past several years we have had many requests to collect the historical articles we have written and publish a book. We have given much thought and consideration to this undertaking. We have sought advice and help from people we thought would know something about this sort of project. We have had much encouragement and have made a start in that direction.

However, we have hit upon the idea of putting out a booklet of this kind, if the Woodson County Historical Society would care to sponsor it. A booklet like this would be put out every three months.

The first of these articles we have written first appeared in the Woodson County Post and the Yates Center News in 1936, and have continued periodically in the Post and then the News. We have been encouraged enough historical value to be published.

Appearing in this form they could be bound into a book form after enough issues had been printed.

The booklet would also carry items of interest about the Woodson County Historical Society and we would invite articles, manuscripts, diaries and scrap books about Woodson County that would be of interest.

L.A.H.

WOODSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Organized March, 1965

This Society was formed for Historical and Educational purposes, with the object in mind to collect, to preserve and to display historical records and items of Woodson County and the State Of Kansas, and the publication of Historical Data pertaining to Woodson County and its inhabitants.

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Membership Dues: $2.00 per calendar-Jan. 1 to Dec.31

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$2.00 per year or .50 cents a copy.

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ABOUT WOODSON COUNTY

The Kansas Territorial Legislature known as the "Bogus" Legislature meeting at Pawnee, Kansas in 1855 created Woodson County along with several other counties

There has been some controversy concerning the source of naming Woodson County. According to Andreas "History of Kansas" the name came from Gov. Silas Woodson of Missouri, while the "Annals of Kansas" claim the county was named in honor of Daniel Woodson who was the first secretary of the Territory of Kansas from 1855 into 1857, the latter being accepted as the correct one. The "Bogus" Legislature of 1855 conferred the name of Woodson County upon an unsettled and almost unknown tract of land.

The space designated by the legislature which created it contained very little if any of the territory which now bears the name of Woodson County. One act of the legislature was the laying out of whole blocks of rectangular counties. This was before surveys were made and boundary lines of counties were given in miles from certain points named. The initial point for counties south of the Kansas River was the mouth of that river. Four tiers of counties were blocked off south of this point. Woodson County was in the third tier. In 1857 the counties in the third tier were crowded northward and Wilson County taking in what was mostly all of Woodson County, pushing the latter north to nearly its present boundaries.

While perhaps there were settlers in the county in 1855 we have no record of them. A few pioneers settled in the county in 1856, but the main influx of pioneers seemed to come in 1857.

The first settlers coming into Woodson County through the years 1856-57-58-59 and early 1860 had built cabins, split logs for fences, broke out sod, planted crops, staked out their "claims" and, in general, established homes, but they had no legal claim to their homesteads. They were known as "squatters" and perhaps figured that possession was nine-tenths of the law along with "squatters' rights".

A strip of land running east and west from the Missouri state line west which included all of Woodson County and the south part of Coffey County had at an early date been set aside as a reserve for the New York Indian tribes. The Woodson County part of the reserve was never occupied by any of these tribes. Finding that these Indians would not settle on this reserve the U. S. government in 1860 had this land offered for sale and opened for pre-emption. The settlers then had to go to the land office at Fort Scott to establish their claim to the homes they had built. The land office was moved to Humboldt not long after this.

Ninety per cent of Woodson Countyis listed as upland, the balance as river and creek bottom land . About six per cent of the original surface was forest and the balance being listed as prairie.

The Neosho River cuts across the northeast corner, while the Verdigris River cuts across the southwest corner. Owl Creek with its tributaries, North, West and South Owls, Cherry and Plum creeks drain possibly fifty per cent of the county. West and East Buffalo, with Big and Little Sandy Creeks drain to the south. Dry Creek and Brazil Creek drain to the southwest, while Turkey Creek and its tributary Duck Creek drain to the northeast.

FIRST SETTLERS AND SETTLEMENTS

Just who the first settlers of Woodson County actually were has never been determined. Most every locality has had a "First settler" and each locality has had an abundance of historical tales if one had the time and effort to record and compile it. We will not attempt to tell "In The Beginning", just who the first settler was nor where he settled, but the beginning has to start somewhere so we will begin it in the northeast part of the county as we attempt to give some of the early day history of Woodson County.

There were many types or classes of people among the "early settlers", some no doubt hunters and traders, others adventurers not intending to stay very long in any place, some trying to escape the clutches of the law or a band of vigilantes, but the

majority were a class of sturdy men and brave women who came here to establish a home on the rough frontier. And it is this latter group that credit must go to for the building of our county and state.

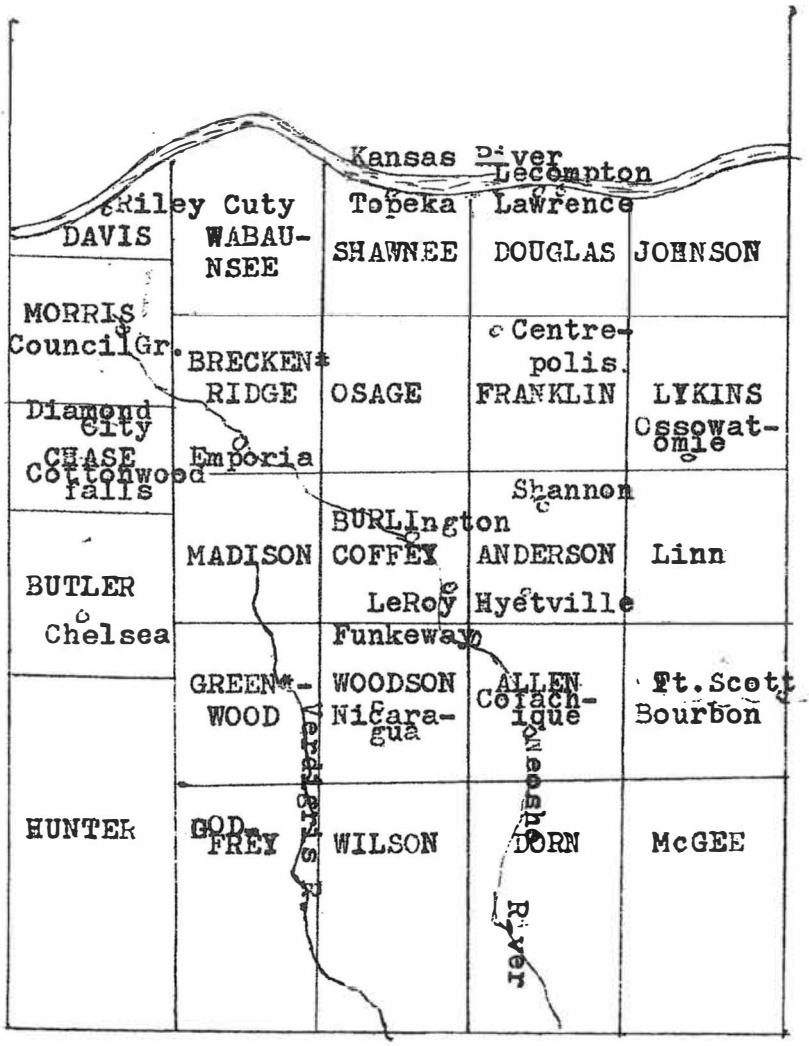
An early day map of Kansas shows Woodson County with two towns or settlements. To the west not a town is shown in Greenwood County, nor a town in Wilson County. Allen County had one town, Cofachique, which was about two miles south of the present Iola. To the north in Coffey County, there were several settlements, LeRoy, Burlington, Ottumway and Neosho City.

One of the settlements in Woodson County was shown as Finksway and the map showed it about accross the Neosho River from where Neosho Falls was built. This was however an error in two ways. The name Funkeway is listed as having been misspelled. It should have been Fuqua, named for Richard A. Fuqua who settled in the Neosho valley in Allen County about three miles southeast of Neosho Falls in 1855 where he established a trading post and became an agent among the Indians along the Neosho River. The name of Leonard Fugua was also listed as an Indian agent there.

The name of Fuqua was also listed as a voting place south of LeRoy near the Coffey-Woodson County line, so the settlement may not have been in Woodson County.

The other town listed was Nicaragua. On the map it would indicate that it was located somewhere south of Yates Center. A town called Nicaragua was incorporated in 1857 by J. N. Jefferson, J. L. Caldwell and D. T. Mitchell. Whether the town was ever layed out we did not learn, but is believed to be just a "paper" town-incorporated and plotted and never built nor even layed out.

A letter written from Belmont in January, 1858 that we will tell about later stated that Belmont was located on the map near where Nicaragua is placed, there being no town in the county by that name.



Sketch of early day map, listed as around 1861, although must have been marked before that. Note names of counties and towns. And the lack of some towns. Also note the Verdigris River does not touch Woodson County.

Another map listed as (the early 1860's) has for Woodson-two towns-Funkeway and Belmont.

NEOSHO FALLS

On April 6, 1857, two men in an open buggy pulled by one horse arrived on the bank of the Neosho River in the northeast corner of the county. Here the two men, Nathaniel S. Goss and Isaac W. Dow found they had come to the end of their long journey from Waverly, Iowa. The men had come to LeRoy and then crossed the Neosho to the west side and were following the river as they came across into Woodson County just east of the place called Moody later.

Coming around a bend in the river about a mile south of the county line they came upon a log cabin that was the home of John Woolman and wife Mary Jane and some children. Andreas History of Kansas gives John Woolman as one of the first settlers of Woodson County, coming herein in March 1857. If that is correct he must have just crossed the county line as he had been appointed as the first probate judge of Coffey County in February, 1857

As the two men followed the course of the stream for the next two or three miles they found it had several riffles indicating that the land was falling rather rapidly. The men were looking for a place to build a mill and needed faster flowing water. Where the river straightened out to the southeast for a ways they found a broad ledge of rock that went across the river, making a falls, and making the stream swifter. The men decided that this was the place for their mill. Here the river had made a gradual fall of around nine feet in over a two mile course. The decision to build the mill at this spot however was not made before they had thoroughly inspected the river and its banks. One day as they were going along the north east side of the river they came to a large bend in what they thought was the river. As their horse was tired they tied it to a tree and started walking the stream. After following it for quite a distance they noticed the horse and buggy ahead of them and soon discovered they had made a complete circle. The stream was an old river bed that the men named Circle Lake and it still goes by that name.

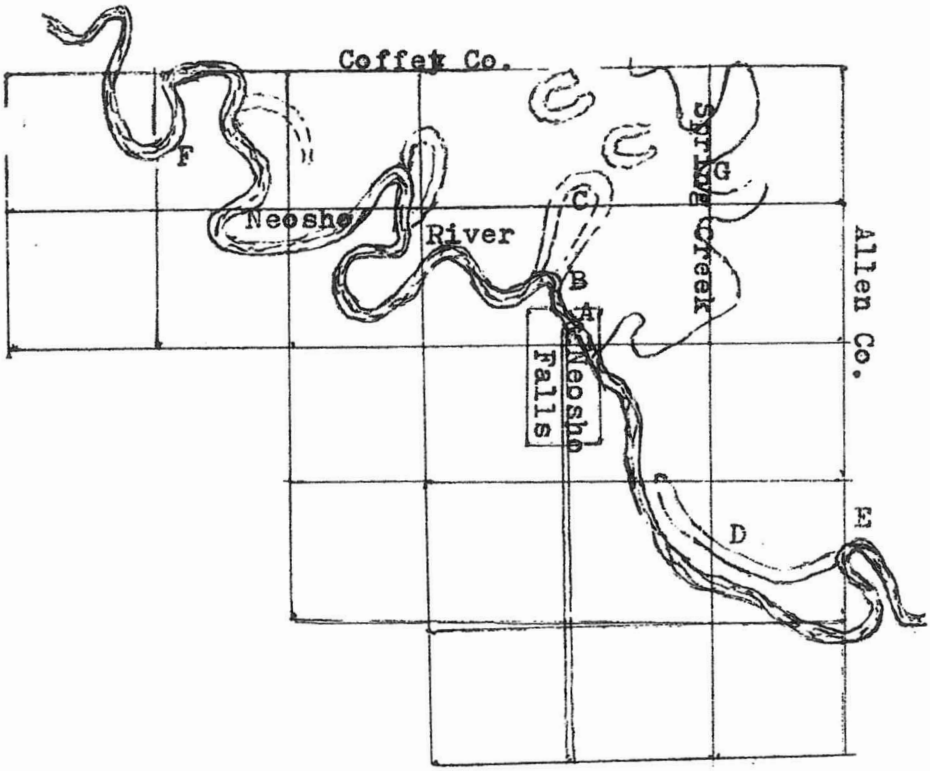
Besides the Woolman family there was another log cabin about two miles northeast of the "Falls" occupied by John Chapman and his wife Kitty. The Chapmans had built their cabin along the crooked stream known as Spring Creek. On the Chapman claim was a large spring that may be where the stream got its name. This spring was located in the southwest corner of the southwest quarter of section 22-23-17. Chapman had came here in March, 1857.

Having decided the "Falls" was the place to locate their sawmill the men made plans to establish here, as the river had a drop off about two feet at this place.

N. S. Goss started at once for St. Louis to obtain machinery and equipment for the building of the mill. I. W. Dow stayed here in camp with a band of Indians that were camped on the north side of the river across from the future townsite on what was later the Rueben Slavens farm. Just how long it took Goss to make the trip after the machinery is uncertain, for evidently it was brought at least part of the way by ox team.

In due time Goss returned with the sawmill machinery. I. W. Dow was a practical millwright. The mill was built with a large wooden waterwheel to run the machinery. The rock ledge was heightened some with a log dam, and soon the mill was in operation. Sometime before the mill was in operation two log cabins were built on the north side of the river. While both Goss and Dow have been referred to as the founders of the town it seemed to be Goss who did the planning and building of the frontier town. They had intended to call the new town Neosho Rapids but found there was another settlement by that name in Kansas so they called it Neosho Falls.

It was on the 6th day of April, 1857 that N. S. Goss and Dow came here and just six weeks later on May 21 that Goss established a postoffice in one of the log cabins and called it Neosho Falls. There was just a few cabins scattered along the river, but the mail was handled here for those families. Goss was postmaster for a couple of years. Andreas History of Kansas states that the postmastership was held by Goss until 1859, when Peter Stevens became



A - Where first mill and settlement was made.
B - Where I. W. Dow stayed in camp with Indians.
C - Circle Lake.
D - Old river bed once known as Crescent Lake.
E - Trading post of Richard Fugua.
F - John Woolman Cabin
G - John Chapman Cabin

We have sketched in some of the bayou's evidently old river beds. The two north of Circle Lake could be old creek beds.

H - "The Island" called that since the river changed course not many years ago.

postmaster, but the names of postmasters as supplied by the Kansas State Historical Society does not even mention any Stevens. Ebenezer H. Curtiss was listed as the second postmaster.

OTHER FIRSTS AT NEOSHO FALLS

One of the first crude log cabins was erected by Enoch Fender who arrived at the "Falls"on August 26, 1857. His wife Sophia soon came to the new settlement and was the first white woman there. They raised a large family and had a great deal to do in the building of the county.

The first manufactoring industry of course, was the sawmill built in 1857 by N. S. Goss although the owners were listed as N. S. Goss, Benjiman F. Goss, his brother, T. L. Clark, a brother-in-law and William Brown a relative.

Benjiman Goss and wife Abbey had came here in the fall of 1857. They first lived in one of the two log cabins north of the river where Abbey Goss cooked for the entire camp. B. F. Goss built the first frame house at the "Falls".

A grist mill was soon added to the original mill by N. S. Goss who carried a considerable trade with the Indians camped along the Neosho.

Just over the Allen County line, on a rocky hill three miles east and south of Neosho Falls was the trading post of Richard Fuqua who settled there in 1855 and was listed as the first settler in Allen County. This trading post became a favorite trading place for the Sac and Fox Indians along the Neosho River. He also brought quite a herd of cattle with him when he came. This was about a half mile from the Woodson County line.

Two doctors, A. H. McCartney and S. J. Williams came to the Falls in 1857-58. These two men were also early day postmasters there and were active in Woodson County politics.

The first wedding in the new town was between Dr. S. J. Williams and Miss Eva Fender. This was also the first marriage under the new marriage license act in the county. This was October 15, 1859 and their daughter Lucy was the first child born in the town.

Early in 1858, Ruggles and Stevens built a cabin on the south side of the river and began selling groceries and goods. Also this same year the firm of Ruggles and Stevens built the original Falls House, a landmark of the town for many years. (Cornelious Ruggles-Peter Stevens)

J. A. Little, Justice of the Peace, at Neosho Falls, Territory of Kansas, performed the first marriage mentioned above.

The first school taught at Neosho Falls and in the county was by a Miss Emma Coulter in 1858. We believe that this was a private school as was the next term taught by Ebenezer H. Curtiss.

This same year 1858 a school was held over by the Verdigris River where Toronto was later built.

The first school building built at Neosho Falls was late in 1869 with the first school term being held in it in 1870.

While Robert Mowry did not seem to be an ordained minister he was active as a leader in the first regigious activities in the county. He had first came to Burlington in April, 1857 and put up the first saw and grist mill in Coffey County. Mowry preached the first sermon ever delivered in Burlington on the first Sunday in June, 1857. He came to Neosho Falls in January, 1860 to repair and overhaul the mill owned by N. S. Goss.

The large wooden waterwheel that he built was considered a nine-days wonder by the people around the Falls.

Mr. Mowry was a devoted Methodist and began holding religious services in his new home he had built and the result in a short course of time in the organization of the first Methodist church in the Falls.

The first newspaper in the county was called the "Frontier Democrat", published at Neosho Falls in October, 1869 by I. B. Boyles.

The first bank in the county was established by Isaac W. Dow at the Falls in 1871. This bank failed in the financial panic of 1873.

LONELY GRAVES

There are many of these lonely graves of pioneers and their families located at various places over Woodson County. Some of these graves are marked with regular tombstones that were evidently erected in later years, but the majority that were marked were with native stones mostly sandstone as they were easier to carve names on.

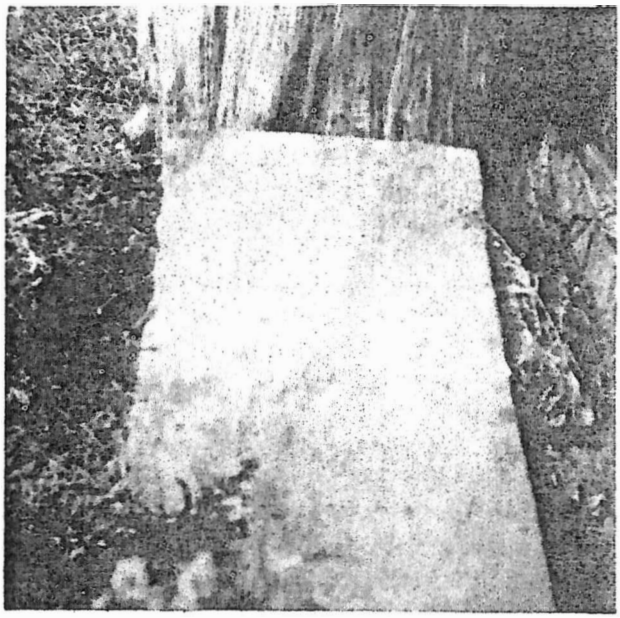
Many of these graves were placed along streams close by the homesteads, some were along the wagon trails across the country. In the early settling of the county many graves especially of children and in many cases the mothers were located close to the homestead and then in later years moved to a cemetery.

The grave of Emily R. Condict was placed very close to the bank of Owl Creek in the NW¼ of section 26-25-16. She was buried there in February 1860. A stone was placed there evidently in later years with the inscription; "Erected by her sons". We have reason to believe that the Condicts were very early day pioneers along Owl Creek, although many tales have been told about this grave.

In a common grave, on a peninsula where Spring Branch emties into Owl Creek about two miles northwest of Yates Center, Rebecca Mitchell and her twin babies were buried. Time and the elements have worn away the names on the native sandstone marker, and the lonely grave is covered with trees and brush. The pioneer mother and her twin babies died at the birth of the babies in 1869.

On a high bluff overlooking the Verdigris Valley, a lone grave lies beneath a pine tree. The pioneer was buried there in 1870. The site now overlooks the water of the Toronto Reservior.

The following picture shows the broken stone and date of death, but the name was not legible.



We will continue about these lonely pioneer graves in later issues. It looks like a good project for the Historical Society would be to locate and mark or preserve the markers in some way.

At present some of the markers are in fair condition while others are almost obliterated.

ABOUT WOODSON COUNTY

Some items of interest both old and new. Work and improvements are slowly but surely getting ahead on the interior of the building that was purchased by the Woodson County Historical Society in May, 1967. It is hoped by the Executive committee that the building will be ready to display and store items and articles of interest sometime in the forepart of 1968.

This building is located on Mary Street (U. S. 54). It was the first church building in Yates Center built by the Christian congregation.

In later years it was used as a chicken hatchery. The large incubator was removed and work has been progressing favorably.

***** ***** *****

The Woodson County Post published at Neosho Falls carried this article the first of April, 1874.

The Emporia District Camp Meeting will convene at Toronto the 11th of August, 1874. Provision will be made for the pastors of the district, their wives and teams.

Feed for horses, lumber for tents, wood and water for the encampment at hand. People desiring tents put up in advance will address; Rev. A. Davis, Toronto, Kansas.

***** ***** *****

August 29, 1874 - Toronto

The District Camp Meeting came to a close on Monday last. Some 30 ministers were in attendance and the congregation on the Sabbath was estimated to number 800. Lang did a good business during the damp meeting by running a hack to and from the grounds. Fare for the round trip including hash at the Toronto House - .25 cents.

***** ***** *****

Join and support the Woodson County Historical Society. Know and help preserve local history and historical items of value and interest.

Woodson County has long been in need of a Historical Society, let's keep it alive and growing.

A State Business Directory of 1882-1883 gives the following information about Woodson County.

List of Post Offices in Woodson County:

Byron	Everett	Toronto
Center Ridge	Finney	Neosho Falls
Coloma	Hamburgh	Yates Center
Cookville	Piqua	
Defiance	Rose	

John P. St. John was Governor
D. W. Finney was Lieutenant Governor

The County Officers were:

George W. Davis - Sheriff H. S. Trueblood,Clerk
J. E. Pickett, - Attorney J. W. Depew, Treasurer

The only bank given in the county is Woodson County National, Yates Center. F. Follett, Prop.

The town of Byron is listed 9 miles north of Yates Center, mail twice a week. W. M. Reed, Postmaster, with the following names.

James M. Baldwin, Livestock
J. Bell, Carpenter
Rev. J. Heritage (Baptist)
Christian Phelps, coal miner
J. V. Raber, Justice of the Peace
Wm. M. Reed, Livestock and farmer
H. Switzer, Blacksmith
T. P. Tucker, Boot and shoemaker
C. N. Ward, Syrup manufacturer

The town of Center Ridge is listed as 16 miles southeast of Yates Center. Population 60. Mail tri-weekly by stage from Humboldt.

Rev. T. M. Barker (Baptist)
Rev. J. Bothwell (Congregational)
Rev. Jackson Duff (Presbyterian)
G. W. Grebe, General store and Postmaster
Wesley Richardson, Constable
Rev. E. Richards (Congregational)

The town of Coloma, 10 miles north of Yates Center, says a blacksmith is needed.

O. P. Augustine, Justice of the Peace
Walter F. Brewer, Postmaster, Stationer and Livestock
D. S. Park, Wagonmaker
J. A. Wilcox, Carpenter
J. W. Wood, Carpenter

Cookville, 16 miles southeast of Yates Center. No names.

Defiance, formerly county seat, mail daily from Humboldt. David Phillips, Postmaster and general store.

Everett, Country post office on Cherry Creek 8 miles northeast of Yates Center. Meetings by Methodist and Congregational churches and there is a district school. Stage to Neosho Falls and Yates Center daily.

James Eaton, Postmaster and Stationer.
W. W. Bell, Livestock
J. J. Davis, Livestock
A. Hamilton, Livestock
M. M. & W. C. Johnson, Livestock
Edward Lynch, Livestock
Col. D. M. Ray, Livestock
John Walter, Carpenter
Major A. O. Woter, Livestock

Finney, 10 miles northwest. Land may be had from $5 to $20 per acre. Mail twice a week. D. T. Collins, Postmaster and general store.

Hamburgh, 14 miles southeast of Yates Center 6 miles west of Humboldt. Mail daily by stage from Humboldt.

W. B. Hamm, Postmaster, groceries & notions.
S. H. Delp, Livestock
C. W. Griffith, Justice of the Peace
J. H. Herefard, Sewing Machine Agent
Ernest Linds, Mason
W. B. McKinney, Livestock
C. H. McNutt, Sewing Machine Agent
J. M. McNutt, Meat Market
J. P. McNutt, Livestock

Henry Pens, Constable
W. F. Servey, Carpenter
Eli Stroh, Blacksmith
Joseph Webb, County Surveyer
M. A. Weekery, Teacher

No list from Piqua.

Rose, tri-weekly stages to Yates Center and Humboldt. Fares 50¢ and 75¢. N. A. Trimble, Postmaster.

Toronto, Population 150, on the Verdigris River. Methodist and Baptist churches and school. Has newspaper, The Times. Land $3 to $20 per acre. Stage to Humboldt daily, and to Eureka tri-weekly.

C. F. Webb, Postmaster
J. H. Afferbaugh, Blacksmith
Byington and Shannon, Hardware
G. D. Chamberlain, Grocer
Sanford Clute, Shoemaker
Robert Daly, Justice of the Peace
J. M. Dickerson, Justice of the Peace
George R. Johnson, General Store
Johnson and Co., Meat market
S. R. Kellogg, General Store
W. S. Lockard, General Store
McLeod Bros., Livery
A. H. Mann, Physician
S. P. Miller, Hotel Prop.
J. T. Palmer, Barber
Andrew Rowan, Blacksmith
S. H. Starrett, Druggist
Toronto Times, Weekly
J. Truman, Baker
Wm. C. Wille, Saddles and harness

Note: Coloma was actually 5½ miles north of Yates Center.

Hamburgh was on the county line and at one time was in Allen County

CHARTER MEMBERS
WOODSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Abbott, Alma	Yates Center
Adams, A. D.	" "
Ashley, Iva	" "
Augustine, Ruth	" "
Beine, Maynie	" "
Beine, Walter	" "
Beine, Jeanette	" "
Bowers, Walter	" "
Bowers, Helen	" "
Butler, Ray F.	" "
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Cannady, Paul	" "
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Collins, Leo	" "
Collins, Agnes	" "
Cooper, Jane	" "
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Harding, Lester A.	Yates Center
Harding, Edith E.	" "
Hare, Mary	Toronto
Hassenflug, Mrs. Ira	(7009 Fisk,
Hassenpflug, Ira	(Kansas City Mo.
Hassenpflug, Elsie E.	3408 S. Shartell Oklahoma City, Ok.
Hampton, Charles E.	Yates Center
Herder, Arthur	" "
Herder, Vonda	" "
Henderson, Clarence	" "
Herring, Keith	" "
Herring, Helen	" "

Hibbard, Mrs. Charles---------- Toronto
Hibbard, Mrs. Faye---------- "

Ireland, Mrs. Avis---------- Yates Center

Johnson, Frank---------- " "

Kramer, Christine ---------- Piqua
Kipp, Henry C.---------- "
Kipp, Jane ---------- "
Krueger, Elmer F.---------- Yates Center
Krueger, Leona---------- " "
Krueger, Richard F.---------- Topeka
Krueger, Karen---------- Washington, D.C.

Laidlaw, Pearl Cantrell---------- Yates Center
Lamb, Alice---------- " "
Linde, J. W.---------- " "
Linde, Elizabeth Hamilton---------- " "

Manske, Russell---------- " "
Manske, Ella---------- " "
Mann, Albert---------- Toronto
Martin, Katherine---------- Yates Center
McConnell, Georgia---------- " "
Morris, Leland---------- " "
Morris, Virginia---------- " "
Mulsow, Neva---------- " "

Paske, Lou A.----------Toronto
Peterson, Mrs. P. C.---------- Yates Center

Rhea, Perry---------- " "
Riley, W. J.---------- Piqua
Riley, Maurice---------- "
Riley, Rose Mary---------- "
Rose, O. C.----------(704 Virginia
Rose, Mrs. O. C.----------(Amarilla, Texas
Ross, J. E.---------- Yates Center
Ross, Marie---------- " "

Shurtleff, Fannie---------- " "
Smith, Mary Ann---------- " "
Smith, Pearl---------- Toronto
Street, J. C. ---------- Yates Center

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Stoll, Ray V.	" "
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Surber, Maudie	" "
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Wille, Rose	Piqua
Winfrey, Virgil	Yates Center
Winfrey, Iris Degler	" "
Wix, Marie	" "
Wrampe, H. A.	" "
Wrampe, Milton	" "
Wrampe, Marcella	" "
Wyble, Samuel	" "

There were 96 charter members.

Through 1966 the membership reached 114, but for 1967 there were 101 paid up members.

IN MEMORIAM

For members of the Woodson County Historical Society who have passed away.

Mrs. Leona Krueger	51	September, 1966
Mrs. Fannie Shurtleff	87	December 15, 1966
Mr. A. D. Adams	84	June 13, 1967